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Urged U.S. Jet Cover Over Bay of Pigs, Ex-Envoy Testifies

WASHINGTON, Oct. 31.—A former diplomat has testified that as "senior partner" in an Eisenhower administration team planning the 1961 Cuban invasion, he recommended that jet planes be used to provide air cover for refugee beachheads.

William Willauer said in testimony made public today he was "cut out of the operation" a month after President Kennedy took office and two months before the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion of April 17, 1961, and never got a chance to "go firm on what I thought should be done."

Willauer testified July 27, 1961, before the Senate internal security subcommittee.

Special Aide to Herter

He served as ambassador to Honduras from 1954 to 1958, then as ambassador to Costa Rica until 1960. He was credited by former Central Intelligence Agency Director Allen Dulles with playing a key role in the United States-backed revolution that overthrew the Communist regime in Guatemala.

Willauer became a special assistant to former Secretary of State Christian Herter on Dec. 10, 1960.

Willauer said he felt "one of

the great weaknesses of the invasion plan was the lack of provision of top air cover."

Recalls Problems

Willauer said there were problems about getting jets and "there were also problems about the Joint Chiefs of Staff not having been cut in until I got them in."

Willauer said that on Jan. 26, 1961, after President Kennedy took office, Secretary of State Dean Rusk asked him to continue "in the same functions as I had been performing. . . ."

But Willauer said that in late February when he sought to see CIA officials, he got a call from "Tracy Barnes, my junior partner. . . ." He said Barnes told him, "We can't talk to you any more. . . ."

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